

Review of the Study of the Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

Victoria Esses

Pathways to Prosperity Partnership



Context

- Growing awareness that more attention needed to be paid to communities' receptivity to newcomers and the long-term integration of immigrants
- Increasing focus on regionalization required defining and identifying key characteristics of a welcoming community
- Critical feature of IRCC's modernization initiative was a focus on outcomes rather than solely inputs and activities

The Study

- 2010: Esses, Hamilton, Bennett-AbuAyyash, and Burstein commissioned to define and develop list of 20 characteristics of a welcoming community
- Required to be based on extant research literature and evidence-based

What is a Welcoming Community?

- **Spatial dimension** – a physical location in which newcomers feel valued and their needs are served
- **Discourse dimension** – a community has agency and engages in actions that facilitate the integration of newcomers
- A collective effort to create a place where individuals feel valued and included
- A location that has the capacity to meet the needs and promote inclusion of newcomers, and the machinery in place to produce and support these capacities



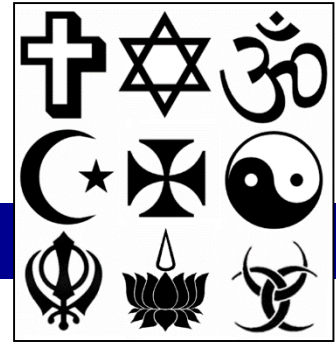
Characteristics



1. Employment Opportunities
2. Fostering of Social Capital
3. Affordable and Suitable Housing
4. Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community
5. Presence of Newcomer-Serving Agencies that Can Successfully Meet the Needs of Newcomers



6. Links between Main Actors Working toward Welcoming Communities
7. Municipal Features and Services Sensitive to the Presence and Needs of Newcomers
8. Educational Opportunities
9. Accessible and Suitable Health Care
10. Available and Accessible Public Transit



11. Presence of Diverse Religious Organizations
12. Social Engagement Opportunities
13. Political Participation Opportunities
14. Positive Relationships with the Police and the Justice System
15. Safety



16. Opportunities for Use of Public Space and Recreation Facilities

17. Favourable Media Coverage and Representation

Framework

- Outcome indicators
- Key processes and structures that produce and sustain these outcomes
- Examples of best practices

Employment Opportunities

| Outcomes | Key Processes and Structures | Examples of Best Practices |
|--|---|--|
| Low unemployment rates Adequate wages (income) Low underemployment rates | Immigrant employment councils/networks | London-Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council (LMIEC) |
| | Credential recognition and bridging programs | International Pharmacy Graduate Program (U of T) |
| | Programs that valorize foreign work experience | Workplace Integration of Newcomers (WIN) |
| | Programs that support entrepreneurial opportunities | Passport to Business Success (Ontario) |
| Lack of employment discrimination | Programs that seek to create inclusive workplaces | City of Winnipeg Best Employers for New Canadians |